



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
The Secretary of Commerce
Washington, D.C. 20230

May 25, 2010

The Honorable Bob Riley
Governor of Alabama
Montgomery, AL 36130

Dear Governor Riley:

Recognizing the enormity of adverse effects of this oil spill causing large areas of Federal and some State waters to be closed to all fishing in order to protect human health and the marine environment, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has made a positive commercial fishery failure determination under section 312(a) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. I am declaring a fishery resource disaster for affected fisheries in waters off Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama.

We are making this determination in order to recognize the damage to marine fisheries and associated economic hardship on affected fishermen and dependent businesses. This disaster determination will help ensure that the Federal Government is in a position to mobilize the range of assistance that Alabama fishermen and fishing communities may need.

We all recognize the financial hardship that this spill has caused for commercial and recreational fishermen and businesses that are dependent on those fisheries. BP—as a responsible party—can and must pay the costs. Thus far it has paid \$27.8 million on 23,451 total claims. I pledge that NMFS will work with the State of Alabama to address issues within the affected fishing communities.

Further, the Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA)—in close coordination with NOAA—has been in the Gulf Coast region, meeting with the economic development practitioner community to assess the potential economic implications and effects from the spill. Once the economic impacts are known, EDA stands ready to respond with whatever resources are available with its traditional suite of economic development programs and tools.

If you have further questions, please contact April Boyd, Assistant Secretary for Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs, at (202) 482-3663.

Sincerely,

Gary Locke